COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to analyze how politics affects the lives of citizens in cities and metropolitan areas of the developing world; in other words, how does politics resolve—or not—the main conflicts and tensions experienced by citizens in urban areas. We will focus on two conceptions of urban politics. The first is the urban domain as a physical agglomeration distinct from rural or suburban areas. In this sense, we will concentrate on various problems crosscut by urban inequality from segregation in land use and discriminatory provision of public utilities to different modes of political incorporation and intermediation.

The second conception of urban politics refers to local as opposed to national or state-level politics. In this regard, we will look at the pros and cons of decentralization, the coordination problems that emerge between different government tiers, and the specific dynamics of local governance; in other words, we will attempt to answer the question who has power in the city, how they exercise it, and what are the consequences of that power distribution. We will look at how governments make and implement policies, and how social mobilization can trigger, expedite, or confront these decisions.

Although we will rely mostly on political science studies, we will also incorporate readings from other disciplines, including urban studies, sociology and anthropology. The regional focus will be mostly on Latin America, although we will also look at urban politics in the United States and in other developing regions such as Africa and Asia (especially India and China).

CLASS SCHEDULE

Wednesday and Friday 11:55-1:35

Office hours: Wednesdays 3 – 5pm and by appointment. All office hours will be held remotely.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Each week I will send out a brief overview outlining that week’s main themes and linking the topic to our previous sessions. I will post at least one short online lecture for you to view before discussion sessions and send out preparatory questions, guidelines or exercises.
You are expected to have done the readings, watched the online lecture and engaged with the discussion questions, both in the online forum and in our seminar sessions. Participation is an integral part of the course’s assessment.

You are also required to produce a research paper to approve the course. The paper should study how federal, state and/or local government officials have dealt with or are attempting to tackle different aspects of urban inequality in Hartford or its surrounding metropolitan area. The paper may address themes not included in the syllabus; however, the student must address some of the theories and cases discussed in the course.

You are encouraged to collect primary data for their research. If social distancing guidelines are still in place, data collection can be limited to online resources (e.g. books, papers, government documents, official statistics, oral narratives, NGO reports, etc.). Some lectures might focus on methodological background to enable you to approach this research. You will have to present partial products of their research project during the semester.

Grade distribution:

Class participation (20%)

Research paper (80%):

- Research question and plan (15%)
- Preliminary version: either an elaborated outline or an early draft (25%)
- Final version (40%)

Work outside class

Students are expected to spend 11 to 13 hours per week working on this course outside the classroom.

Late policy

Barring an extraordinary excuse, late written assignments will be marked down one third of a grade (e.g., A to A-) per day.

Grading Standards

Grading Scale:  
A= 95-100%  A-= 90-94%  B+= 85-89%  B= 80-84%  B-= 75-79%  
C+= 70-74%  C= 65-69%  C-= 60-64%  D= 55-59%  D-= 50-54%  F= < 50%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Exceptional work. Demonstrates superb understanding of the course material <em>and</em> outstanding critical thinking and analytic rigor. Goes beyond simply answering the prompt to craft a creative and insightful analysis. Communicates information in a clear and concise manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good work. Demonstrates a strong grasp of course material and good analytic rigor, but with some errors (e.g. faulty assumptions in logic or some incorrect descriptions of an author’s argument). Solid work, but not the most original or insightful analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Mediocre work. Applies some course material and themes but demonstrates considerable misunderstanding of material. Difficult to discern the student’s argument and the logic supporting this argument.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Poor work. May attempt to apply some course materials and themes but demonstrates very serious errors or misunderstanding of course material. The student doesn’t appear to have any argument. Shows little effort.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Very poor work. Assignment fails to address the prompt and guidelines. Reflects a lack of effort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Academic integrity**

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates and to share sources. You should ensure, however, that any work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research/writing and reflects your own approach to the topic. You also must cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. The College’s guidelines on academic integrity and plagiarism are detailed in the “Intellectual Honesty” section of the Student Handbook available at [https://www.trincoll.edu/SiteCollectionDocuments/StudentHandbook.pdf](https://www.trincoll.edu/SiteCollectionDocuments/StudentHandbook.pdf). You should familiarize yourselves with these principles and understand that those found in violation of the Trinity College Student Integrity Contract are subject to a range of penalties, including suspension or expulsion. The minimum penalty for plagiarism in this class is the failure of the course. Finally, if you have received any help with your writing (feedback, etc.), you must acknowledge this assistance in a footnote at the beginning of your assignment.

**Accommodations for students with disability**

Trinity College is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have approval for academic accommodations, please notify me during the first two weeks of the semester or a minimum of 10 days prior to needing your accommodations. Please be sure to meet with me privately to discuss implementation.
If you do not have approved accommodations, but have a disability requiring academic accommodations, or have questions about applying, please contact Lori Clapis, Coordinator of Accessibility Resources at 860-297-4025 or at Lori.Clapis@trincoll.edu.

**Virtual classroom etiquette**

In these challenging times, I am committed to offer you the best learning environment possible. However, this requires your collaboration too. Out of respect to your fellow students and me, please

- Be on time.
- Dress appropriately.
- Find an appropriate place to take the meeting. You should be sitting on a desk or table, not your bed.
- Make sure your background is professional and work appropriate (if this is not possible, you may use a virtual background).
- Always leave your video on.
- Avoid interruptions during the meeting.
- Make sure everyone can see you and hear you clearly when you are speaking.
- Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- Leave your keyboard alone. Please, if you need to take notes during class discussions, do so on a notebook.
- Resist the urge to text or check your phone unless instructed to do so as part of the activity (students who do so will be marked absent).
- Don’t eat during the meeting; drinking is allowed but please do so quietly.

**Finding me:** I will conduct office hours remotely and by appointment. I encourage you to come to office hours even if you don’t have specific questions or concerns. Please, sign up for office hours here:

Also, feel free to email me with any questions, concerns, or feedback; I will try to return your email within 24 hours (business days).

**Required readings**

All readings will be available in electronic form on the course Moodle site.

Thanks for your attention! Looking forward to a great semester ☺
COURSE OUTLINE.

Week 1. Introduction. Urban politics, inequality and citizenship in the developing world (September 9 & 11)


Week 2. Urbanization: Modernist City Planning and Democracy (September 16 & 18)

Scott, James C. Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed. Yale Agrarian Studies Series, 1998. Chapters 2 (pp. 53-64, 76-83) and 4 (pp. 103-130).

Perlman, Janice. Favela: Four decades of living on the edge in Rio de Janeiro. Oxford University Press, 2010. Introduction (recommended), Chapters 1 (pp. 24-40) and 2 (pp. 41-61).


First assignment (research question and plan) due

Weeks 3 & 4. Urban inequality and segregation (September 23, 25 & 30, October 2)


Rothstein, Richard. The color of law. Chapters 2, 3 and 4.


Weeks 5 & 6. Public and semi-public goods provision: environmental goods, infrastructure and public utilities (October 7, 9, 14 & 16)


Second draft of paper is due

Week 7. Public safety and enforcement of the rule of law (October 21 and 23)


Week 8. Urban politics in democracies (October 28 and 30)


**Weeks 9 & 10. Political intermediation and participation: clientelism and grassroots mobilization (November 4, 6, 11 & 13)**


**Final version of paper is due**